



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

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Opening Statement of U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley
Chairman of the Committee on Finance
Nominations Hearing
Wednesday, December 14, 2005

It's my pleasure to welcome several nominees to the Finance Committee today. We have a lot of work to do here today, so I will keep my introduction short.

All the nominees before us have had long distinguished careers that make them well-qualified for the positions for which they are nominated. I'm sure all of them are eager to get started in their new roles.

First, I am pleased to welcome Tony Fratto, the President's nominee to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Public Affairs. Mr. Fratto's experience with communications in government and the private sector will be a great asset in his role as the Treasury's liaison to the general public.

I am pleased to welcome David Steele Bohigian as the President's nominee for Assistant Secretary of Commerce, Market Access and Compliance at the U.S. Department of Commerce. In this position, Mr. Bohigian will make it his priority to obtain market access for U.S. firms and workers and achieve full compliance of our trade agreements. Unfair barriers to trade must be removed expeditiously. This is at the core of this market access and compliance job. I look forward to developing a strong working relationship with Mr. Bohigan, should he be confirmed.

I would like to welcome David M. Spooner. The President has nominated Mr. Spooner to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for the Import Administration at the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Import Administration serves an import role in trade policy by enforcing our trade laws to allow U.S. companies and workers to compete on a level playing field. These laws are especially critical for many U.S. industries that face unfair competition. But, we must also make it our priority to enforce our trade remedy laws in a transparent and impartial manner. I trust that Mr. Spooner will be able to fulfill this role.

Vincent Ventimiglia, Jr. has been nominated for the position of Assistant Secretary of Legislation at the Department of Health and Human Services. Mr. Ventimiglia has had a distinguished career in legislative development and advocacy, both in the public and private sectors. The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Legislation acts as a liaison between Congress and the administration and requires an effective and responsive leader. Since Mr. Ventimiglia has served in several positions at the U.S. Senate and understands the unique needs of Congress, I am confident that he is the right candidate for the job.

I would like to welcome Richard T. Crowder, the President's nominee for Chief Agricultural Negotiator at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

A strong Chief Agriculture Negotiator is critical to the success of our trade negotiations. I had an opportunity to meet him and I am confident that he will put the interests of U.S. agriculture at the forefront of trade negotiations, right where they should be. I look forward to working with him to advance U.S. agriculture in the global marketplace.

I am pleased to welcome Jeffrey Brown as the President's nominee to the Social Security Advisory Board. As a member of the Board, Dr. Brown will work on a bipartisan basis to advise Congress on matters related to Social Security and SSI. I look forward to working with Dr. Brown, should he be confirmed.

That said, once again I would like to welcome all of our nominees to the Committee. I appreciate your patience with this process and am hopeful that all of these nominees may move through the Senate quickly.

With that, let me turn to my distinguished friend and colleague, the Ranking Member of the Finance Committee, Senator Baucus.